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EBS PO moves into second phase of IT-SE effort

by Hang Pham, EBS Program Office

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — The EBS PO has moved into Phase II of the “IT for the Scientist and Engineer” (IT-SE) initiative, which began last year.

The initial phase of the IT-SE initiative consisted of extensive interviews, workshops, a survey, and a pilot program to evaluate the Oz-IPM project management tool. The purpose of the initial phase of the IT-SE effort was to evaluate the work environment and the day-to-day work characteristics of the AFRL Scientists and Engineers (S&Es) in order to identify opportunities to improve the S&Es’ work environment through process improvement or through the application of information technology (IT).

The S&Es’ ability to deliver science and technology work products in support of the war fighter is related to the amount of time available to focus on their core science and technology tasks, and the quality of tools, processes, and policies that support those tasks. The objective of the IT-SE study was to identify how S&Es spend their time and determine what might be accomplished to allow more time to be spent on S&T tasks, and to help them more effectively execute some S&T tasks, such as project management and collaboration.

Findings from the initial assessment were cataloged and prioritized, and a plan was developed for dealing with those issues that provided the greatest opportunity to improve the S&E work environment. FY02 funding was approved to pursue solutions for the top priorities identified during the initial phase of the IT-SE effort. A number of findings from the IT-SE study are being addressed by the AFRL Corporate Information Officers (CIOs), Corporate Technology Officers (CTOs), and Corporate Requirements Officers (CROs), including:

- Improve Internet performance through improved Firewall technology
- Recommend System Back-up standards (hardware & software) for S&E workstations and servers
- Improve Certification & Accreditation (C&A) process through process improvement and selecting automated tools to support the process
- Improve the Communications-Computer System Requirements Document (CSRSD) process and automated support tools

Additionally, the IT-SE team will work to accomplish the following in FY02:

- Document S&T Project Management (PM) processes in a PM Handbook based on AFRL best practices
- Support implementation of a standard S&E PM tool by developing an upgrade plan to ensure the standard PM tool will be evolved to meet all S&E requirements for an integrated set of PM tools
- Implement an S&E project team collaboration tool for a limited group of S&Es to confirm the tool meets S&E requirements; then recommend expanded usage in FY03 if it meets S&E needs
- Implement Inter/Intranet search tools for a limited group of S&Es to confirm tools meet requirements; then recommend expanded usage in FY03 if they meet S&E needs
- Implement R&D Case File structure using COTS tool
- Develop workflow management for highly repetitive project management processes
- Develop recommendations for further rollout of successful products during FY03
- Identify additional S&E requirements for further recommended actions in FY03

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A number of applications will be rolled out to a limited number of S&Es. These limited groups will be used to confirm the value of the application, develop product configurations to best meet S&E needs, and develop rollout plans for a larger user community. A majority of the tools will be configurable COTS (Commercial Off-The-Shelf) products and will be in the hands of some S&Es by this summer. The IT-SE team will be working with various AFRL organizations to identify participants.

The IT-SE effort is part of AFRL's EBS program and is complimentary to other EBS activities currently underway. The IT-SE effort will integrate with TD-MIS and builds upon the Tasker Management Solution Evaluation.

While EBS' emphasis is on a vertical (or Business Area) view of AFRL processes, the IT-SE effort looks horizontally at the S&Es work environment and characteristics. This integrated approach helps ensure that the S&Es interface and relationship to the broader functional processes is consistent with the overall EBS perspective.

If you would like more information about the IT-SE initiative, please contact the EBS Program Manager, John Crist, john.crist@wpafb.af.mil (937) 255-6880 or DSN: 785-6880 or Ronald Dibble in the EBS Program Office (AMS support contractor), ronald.dibble@wpafb.af.mil, (937) 904-8184, DSN: 674-8184. @